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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Government of American Cities. By WILLIAM BENNETT MUNRO. New York: Macmillan, 1912. 8vo, pp. ix+401. \$2.25 net.

American City Government. A Survey of Newer Tendencies. By CHARLES A. BEARD. New York: The Century Co., 1912. 8vo, pp. ix+420. \$2.00 net.

Those who regard the administrative problems of American city government as those most insistently demanding solution will inevitably be disappointed in Professor Munro's new work. They will find in it no discussion of the best methods of garbage disposal or the most enduring kind of pavement, or of the reorganization of police and fire departments for greatest efficiency, or of the proper provisions to be incorporated in public utility franchises. But the author has disarmed criticism on this point by admitting at the start that he will deal "with government rather than with administration, with the framework rather than with the functioning mechanism of the municipal organization"; and he justifies this limitation by the promise of a future volume on the latter phase of the subject. He has been forestalled in the matter, however, by the appearance coincidently with his own book of Professor Beard's *American City Government*, which is devoted almost exclusively to consideration of the administrative activities of municipalities. Indeed the two works admirably supplement each other; what one dismisses with brief comment the other handles extensively and in detail.

No treatise on city government could possibly be complete without some discussion of the relation of city to state and of the powers of municipalities. Professor Munro's manner of treating this problem is bold and commanding. Notice is served on the "home rule" enthusiast that in some matters, e.g., taxation, police, election regulations, indebtedness, education, and charities, especially in metropolitan districts composed of a number of separate municipal corporations, the city cannot be permitted a free hand; the state's interest in these matters is too large. Nevertheless, both Professor Munro and Professor Beard find it a considerable gain when cities are permitted to draft their own charters, as in Missouri, California, and several other states; for the

defects and drawbacks of special legislative charters on the one hand and of general city organization laws on the other are thus avoided. It is noted also that "home rule" has a value as an "agency of political education" and in helping to separate local from state politics. Other needs in this latter respect are wider power for the city, administrative rather than legislative supervision of those matters in which the state must take a hand, and the establishment of strictly municipal parties.

The recent demands for a wider participation by the electorate in the government of the municipality awakens little enthusiasm in Professor Munro. "They endeavor to supplant vicious leadership by no leadership at all." For example, "the substitution of the primary for the caucus has not changed the caliber or the methods of ward or city committees; it has merely given to the old order that added prestige which legal recognition of its status implies"; the recall "puts popularity before efficiency"; most of the arguments advanced in favor of the commission form of city government "can be urged with greater cogency for the policy of concentrating all final powers of an administrative character in the mayor alone"; the referendum is incompatible with the "short ballot" principle, in which, by the way, Professor Munro finds more possibilities for better city government than in many other latter-day political reforms. Nevertheless, Professor Munro, and Professor Beard as well present both sides of the argument on all these questions, thus leaving the student free to make up his own mind.

The organization of the municipal government and the distribution of its powers receive searching analysis and in some respects rather severe criticism from Professor Munro. The mayor's power of veto has in his opinion outlived whatever value it once may have had; the same is true of the system of aldermanic confirmation of the mayor's appointments and concurrence in his removals. Both of these powers are used by the bodies exercising them to shift or to evade responsibility; they belong in the "political scrap-heap," "among the discards of political science." The bicameral council as it still exists in St. Louis, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo is stigmatized as an agency of malfeasance and blackmail, of profitless delay and needless friction. One of the causes of the growing impotence of American city councils is found in the paucity of its powers. Between the state government on the one hand and the city executive on the other the council finds itself shorn of usefulness. Professor Munro advocates an approach to the English policy of management of the city's business by council committees as a cure for both aldermanic and administrative incompetence. It is not

difficult to understand from the foregoing why he finds the commission form of government, with few exceptions, so excellent a development in American civic life. Both authors believe that municipal administration must be performed by experts, not necessarily as heads of departments but through the rank and file of departmental organization. Both, however, recognize the difficulties in the way of carrying out this principle—the apparent hopelessness of trying to separate politics and administration through an adequate and efficient merit system. School administration, in which a lay board directs the technical experts, is cited as an example of the best type of American municipal management.

The character of Professor Beard's book is best indicated by the titles of some of its chapters: "Raising and Spending the City's Money"; "Guarding the City against Crime and Vice"; "Franchises and Public Utilities"; "Municipal Ownership"; "Guarding the Health of the City"; "Tenement-House Reform"; "Municipal Recreation"; "City Planning," etc. Of these the first three named are unusually informative and provocative of thought. Rarely has the meaning of the city's budget been so graphically set forth. The various sources of revenue are discussed, together with the several methods of budget-making. Not least important is the description of the malpractices of careless municipal finance—transferring funds, loading pay-rolls, haphazard purchasing methods, etc. Segregated budgets with full publicity, uniform accounting, special "scrutinizing" officers, and ample chance for complaint by the citizen are needed to force the standards of city finance up to those set by efficient business concerns.

The question of dealing with vice and crime Professor Beard finds to be not merely a problem in police organization and administration but also one in criminal law and judicial machinery and practice. And it is not alone the underpaid, corrupt, inefficient police magistrate, often elected by criminal elements operating through the party, who is in need of reform. Organized crime defended by astute lawyers secures appeal after appeal, continuance after continuance, until eventually its cases are dismissed. The worst result of this is not the freedom of particular criminals, but the complete demoralization of the police and the police courts which thus find their efforts at crime detection and punishment of no avail. It is noted furthermore that the real cure for crime and vice is not found in criminal codes and police forces but in a change in economic conditions.

Professor Beard does not touch upon municipal reform except incidentally. Professor Munro, on the other hand, devotes a whole

chapter to this interesting subject. One important cause of the failure of reform movements in the past is found in their lack, usually, of appreciation of the fact that municipal ills are organic matters and cannot be cured by a mere change in the governmental personnel. Charter reform movements are therefore the most valuable. It is interesting to note, however, that the author himself believes that enlightened public opinion, sound traditions of city administration, and the putting of men of adequate moral fiber into office will accomplish more than change of organization.

These two books taken together furnish us with the most complete and up-to-date treatment of city government we have. Professor Munro's work is better suited to the student of government, its copious reading references and footnotes making it especially valuable in this respect, while Professor Beard's book, though important for the student, is more fitted both in matter and in style for the general reader. One must regret that Professor Munro has relied too confidently on Hatton's *Digest of City Charters*. Admirable as all concede this work to be, it is now seven years old, and seven years is a long time in this period of rapid development in all matters of government, especially of city government. Furthermore, we are still in need of one volume which combines in unified and connected treatment everything handled by these two. Nevertheless he would be indeed a captious critic and an ungrateful reader who would pick flaws in such much needed and such adequate and admirable studies in this most important and difficult field of American politics and administration.

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CHICAGO

Railroads: Rates and Regulation. By W. Z. RIPLEY. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912. 8vo. pp. xviii+659. \$3.00 net.

Professor Ripley's book satisfies a real need and takes a unique, as well as an important, place in American economic literature. It is the first comprehensive and thoroughgoing analysis of the rate-making forces as actually operative in the United States, and as such its publication is a red-letter event in the history of transportation literature. The book is written from the standpoint of social welfare, and its author accepts without question the desirability of strong federal regulation of railway rates and service. Moreover, it gives a strong impression in favor of